

SEATTLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Information Bulletin #2004-1

Interim Policy on the Use and Placement of Alcohol-based Gel Hand Sanitizers

This bulletin provides an interim policy which is subject to change pending final action on pending model code and standards requirements.

Background

After reviewing the data published by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), it is apparent that alcohol-based gel hand sanitizers are responsible for a significant reduction in the infection rates at hospitals and other critical care facilities.

Based on available data, it is the position of this Department that the typical alcohol gel and foam dispensers used in the healthcare setting are of such limited size and volume that the alcohol gels' contribution to the hazard of acceleration of fire development or fire spread is negligible.

Conditions for Use

Therefore, installation of these dispensers within both patient rooms and outside patient rooms within corridors is conditionally approved provided:

- Individual alcohol-based hand sanitizing dispensers do not exceed a maximum individual capacity of 1.2 liters (40.6 ounces).
- Dispensers are not installed above electrical outlets, light switches or other heat or ignition sources.
- Corridors where dispensers are installed have a minimum width of six (6) feet and may not be provided with a combustible floor covering such as carpet.
- Dispensers that project more than 3.5 inches into a corridor are clearly noted in the facility's Fire Safety Plan.
- All storage of replacement alcohol-based hand sanitizing containers on patient floors, regardless of the quantity, shall be within approved flammable liquid storage cabinets.

The aggregate quantity of alcohol-based (Class I-B flammable liquid) hand sanitizing containers stored and used on any floor, including the bulk storage of replacement containers that may be in Central Supply Rooms, shall not exceed the following:

Floor Level		Maximum Allowable Quantity per Control Area ^{a,b,c} (gallons)	Number of Control Areas Per Floor	Fire-resistance Rating for Fire Barriers Separating Control Areas (hours)
Above grade	Higher than 9	6	1	2
	7-9	6	2	2
	6	15	2	2
	5	15	2	2
	4	15	2	2
	3	60	2	1
	2	90	3	1
	1	120	4	1
Below grade		Not allowed		

^a Maximum allowable quantities can be increased 100 percent in buildings equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system.

^b Maximum allowable quantities can be increased 100 percent when stored in approved flammable liquid storage cabinets.

^c The increase allowed by both footnotes a and b shall be applied accumulatively.

All such installations shall be under permit from the Seattle Fire Department.